

The Role of Marketing Public Relations in Cognitive Decision-Making Process through the Enhancement of Brand Awareness (A Case of Chevrolet Spin, Product of General Motors Indonesia)

Clarissa Anugrah¹

Abstract:

Advertising and other kinds of promotional strategies are no longer able to stand individually. There is one important essence: 'Trust'. Marketing Public Relations (MPR) is believed to be the strong key of credibility and capable of becoming the main driver for promotional strategies and advertising. This paper strongly emphasizes the power of marketing public relations which not merely aims awareness as its goal, but using awareness to penetrate into the consumer decision-making process. Chevrolet Spin is a new high-involvement product, manufactured by Indonesian for Indonesian. It has been a legendary product which brought PT General Motors (GM) Indonesia into the list of Top 10 car makers in Indonesia. Regardless the 'new' status, consumers were brave enough to choose Chevrolet Spin as their vehicle. This qualitative research was done through analysis of news and online journals and interviews with consumers. The conclusion shows that marketing public relations certainly has a strong role in consumer decision-making process, but still need to be complemented with other strategies, using elements in the Integrated Marketing Communication mix.

Keywords : Consumer Decision-Making Process, Integrated Marketing Communication, Marketing Public Relations

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¹ The writer is a graduate of the Marketing Communications, Faculty of Business Administration and Communication Sciences, Atma Jaya Indonesia Catholic University, Jakarta, Indonesia. She can be contacted at clarissa.anugrah@gmail.com; clarissa.anugrah@yahoo.com. This paper was presented at the 3rd International Conference on Business and Communication in Kuala Lumpur on April 22-24, 2014 for the student paper competition and won 1st prize.

Introduction

2013 was a great year for the automotive industry in the United States of America. An annual study by Booz & Company and Bloomberg found that 95% of the respondents (who are Original Equipment Manufacturer/OEM and suppliers) were stating their condition as somewhat better or much better than the previous year (2012). On the other hand, more than 85% percent were also expecting profitable growth to continue through 2014.

Based on this fact, the automakers also felt reasonably well prepared for an uptick in the competition. There would be many strategies from each of them to strike the market, attract the audience in many ways, and gain profits. Therefore, the automotive industry was predicted to be on heat by 2013-2014. Apparently, this case was not just happening in the USA, yet also occurred in the ASEAN region.

Eyeing on this opportunity, the brand holders (ATPM) are competing to provide family cars to the market. Almost all brands have had their own low MPV car. Toyota with its Avanza, Suzuki Ertiga, Daihatsu Xenia and Luxio, Suzuki APV, Nissan Evalia, and many more. Currently, the most purchased brands are Toyota Avanza and Daihatsu Xenia. Other brands were trying to chase the popularity of these Japanese brands, yet none of them has succeeded.

Chevrolet Spin is manufactured by a well-known brand holder from the USA, PT General Motors (GM) Indonesia, or GM Indonesia for short. Spin was first launched in April 2013 and assembled locally in GM Indonesia's manufacture facility, Pondok Ungu Bekasi, West Java. The production itself has started since February 2013.

When discussing about the name of Chevrolet, most of the people who own a car will indeed know about this brand. Chevrolet, or mostly referred as Chevy, is a brand of vehicle that produced by the American corporation, General Motors (GM). Chevrolet-branded vehicles are sold in most of the automotive markets worldwide and a well-known car brand.

Although history convinced us that Chevrolet and its brand holder, General Motors, is not a 'rookie' player in the automotive industry, it still needed a revival. By studying the Indonesian auto market in 2012 and using the Japanese cars as a benchmark, they created the one and only Chevrolet Spin. This seven-seat MPV also represents a dramatic change in how GM approaches the local market: from powerful, yet gas-thirsty vehicles of American heritage to fuel-

efficient, people-movers loved by Indonesians. A unique market characteristic which its Japanese rivals has understood best for some time.

A new product and a new 'face' should pass the first path before aiming the profit (sales) and that is reaching brand awareness. It is a comeback for GM Indonesia with their new image and star product – Chevrolet Spin, which was just launched in April 2013- the strategy to reach Indonesia's eye was needed. We know, that even when we have a product which is capable of fulfilling the needs of consumers, it would be a waste when the consumers themselves don't even notice and know our brand. Therefore, the first goal in 2013 for GM Indonesia was enhancing brand awareness to be well-known and supporting the customer's brand decision-making process.

Building brand awareness is very important to your business. Brand awareness is considered as one of the most important element which supports the brand decision-making process. In short, without building brand awareness, people won't even include your brand in the list to be evaluated to make decision in buying products.

Each product has its own strategy to gain brand awareness. The most common and popular way to build brand awareness is using advertising (ads). However, not every product is able to use only ads to attract audience. Firstly, we need to understand the product from the type of brand decision-making process to be able to find the right strategy.

Rene Henry defines marketing public relations in her book: *Marketing Public Relations: The Hows that Make it Work!* (in Harris & Whalen, 2006, P.7), as a comprehensive, that encompasses all public awareness and information program directed to the mass or specialized audience. MPR plays a very important role in messages credibility, which is needed in the information-search step. Making exposures through advertising or other marketing communications way are useful, yet again, for new and high-involvement products such as Chevrolet Spin, credibility is important for the message. A new research conducted by Nielsen, New York, found that 84% of consumers around the world say that they trust more of word-of-mouth recommendations from friends, a form of earned media (a type of advertising which endorsed by a third party – e.g., media), above all other sources of advertising. While advertising is able to create attention, marketing public relations is able to create understanding through detailed information. This is why advertising and marketing public relations have to work together.

In addition of those facts, Harris and Whalen (2006, P.157) also stated that marketing public relations is best-known for its use in the introduction of new products. Products that are newsworthy to the media and of high interest to the consumer (reporters are consumers, too) have the best potential for maximum exposure. Once the consumer sees the advertising, the product is no longer new to the media. The operative word is new because new means 'news'. The business of the news media is to cover the news and the business of marketing public relations planners is to orchestrate programs that persuade media gatekeepers to make room for new products. This condition is the perfect fit to Chevrolet Spin as a new product 'in town'.

Several other researches, such as in a journal by Romy Syaputra, titled *Soyjoy Healthylicious as the Marketing Public Relations Strategy of PT. Amerta Indah Otsuka*, concluded that MPR is done with the purpose of creating word of mouth and publicity. While a thesis by Riniyanti P. Tasskka entitled *Marketing Public Relations in Building Brand Awareness: case study on McAfee products in PT. Transition Systems Indonesia* found that the MPR activity was alleged to increase awareness of the audience. It also stated that the emphasis is not on selling (as in advertising activities). It was only expected to give a strong impact on the level of consumer awareness. There is also a thesis by Agnes Ajeng Koestiyar (2013) which studied *The Impact of Marketing Public Relations Campaign of PT Nestle Indonesia to the Consumer's Healthy Life Style* also concluded that there is a positive impact from the marketing public relations campaign towards consumers' behavior.

Another previous research conducted far longer than the above was written in a book entitled *Marketing Communications: Principles and Practice* by Philip J Kitchen (1999). It is said that PR as a complement to marketing provides information. PR can answer questions which the marketing approach itself is unable to. Back then, marketing public relations was not a common term. There was still a huge distinction between the term of PR and Marketing. It was very different from today's situation, as we know that there have been many studies, researches, or maybe adaptation researches which discussing marketing public relations as a solid and a complete element of integrated marketing communications.

Regardless, for this study it is emphasizing a difference between this research and the other previous studies above. All of the studies above were trying to tell the readers that marketing public

relations is none other than a strategy to build awareness, provide information, and so on. This research will indeed discuss about that matter, but is analyzing the relationship of marketing public relations to the sales itself.

Technically speaking, we now notice that marketing and public relations have been considered as a united approach in order to reach the communication goal. It then becomes a very interesting matter to discuss in regards to how public relations may complement advertising and other marketing tools to raise awareness. It is hope that this research would provide understanding on the importance of marketing and public relations as an integrated term; not just as individual concepts.

Another reason why the writer is attracted to choose PT General Motors (GM) Indonesia is because of GM Indonesia's amazing achievement through communications strategy and implementation for Chevrolet Spin. Written by Otosia.com, a well-known Indonesian automotive website, there were 300 people who ordered Chevrolet Spin on February 2013; far before the launching time (April 2013). This means that there must be a great communications effort behind it to make customers willing to wait.

In regards to the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), it would develop a strong competition between ASEAN countries. Therefore, one must remember that an 'ordinary' strategy to attract the market will no longer be effective. The writer highly believes that marketing public relations is still an uncommon term (especially among the companies in Indonesia). They only know the word 'Marketing' and 'Public Relations' separately. Although they might have already implemented the MPR strategy without knowing the right term, the writer is confident that it will be best if companies aware of this credible strategy and use it to win market in AEC competition.

'The Role of Marketing Public Relations in Cognitive Decision-Making Process Through the Enhancement of Brand Awareness: A Case of Chevrolet Spin, Product of PT General Motors Indonesia' studies the role of strategy and implementation of marketing public relations in some consumer decision-making process's steps by enhancing brand awareness as the first umbrella and what is the use of MPR in the 'reality' from different perspectives. The writer believes that brand awareness (which produced by marketing public relations) is able to play significant role in decision-making process steps such as problem recognition/opportunity, information-search, evaluate choices, and until the buying decision is

made. The writer will also be discussing the context of Chevrolet Spin existence in AEC Competition. This paper will be done in qualitative manner by analyzing the secondary data (online/offline news and journals).

Literature Review

To gain a deeper insight and understanding, the writer provides several relevant literatures as the foundation of this research. The theories focus on Integrated Marketing Communications as the umbrella of Marketing Public Relations, The difference between Marketing and Public Relations and how they merge, as well as the theory of Cognitive Decision-Making Process and how Brand Awareness becomes an important part.

2.1 An Overview of Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC)

This part explains the definition, function, objective, nature, and all related matters in regards to Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC). In order to understand IMC, we must first have a basic understanding of marketing communications as the umbrella of IMC.

American Association of Advertising Agencies (1989) defined IMC as a concept of marketing communications planning that recognizes the added value of a comprehensive plan that evaluates the strategic roles of a variety of communication disciplines- general advertising, direct response, sales promotion, public relations – and combines these disciplines to provide clarity, consistency, and maximum communication impact.

In addition, Don Schultz - one of the leading IMC scholars - explained IMC as the process of managing all sources of information about a product/service to which a customer or prospect is exposed which behaviorally moves the consumer towards a sale and maintains customer loyalty (Schultz, 1991). However, there is a newer definition that he stated in 1998, that “IMC is a strategic business process used to plan, develop, execute, and evaluate coordinated, measurable, persuasive brand communication programs over time with consumers, customers, prospects, and other targeted, relevant external and internal audiences.”

Chitty, Barker, and Shimp (2005, P.5) also stated that “IMC is a communications process that entails the planning, creation, integration, and implementation of diverse forms of marketing communications, such as advertisement, sales promotions, personal selling and publicity, that are

delivered to a brand’s targeted customers and prospects over time.”

The difference between all the definitions above is that the American Association of Advertising Agencies sees IMC just as a concept and not a process, while Chitty, Barker, and Shimp explained IMC as a process. Moreover, Schultz emphasized in his current definition that IMC has no longer been focusing only to the customer, but all of the stakeholders. From this, the writer believes that integrated marketing communications is somehow a very powerful concept as well as a process which is importantly critical for our business. IMC is not just a simple work of combining marketing tools, yet a holistic process of our whole communications strategy.

Seldom does a company use just one marketing communications tools; more often, it uses a mix of them. Marketing communications mix is for the selection of marketing communications tools used at a given time as part of the marketing program. However, some people mistakenly believe that when a company uses a mix of marketing communications tools, that company is practicing integrated marketing communications (IMC). Companies have long used a mix of IMC functions. What is different now is the strategy behind the use and the way the mix is coordinated. Once the company determines the marketing communications mix, the next step is to make sure the various brand messages are strategically consistent and coordinated. The objective is to have all brand messages reinforce one another than working independently. Determining the proper marketing communications mix to ensure “one voice, one look” is one of the things that integrated marketing communications does (Duncan, 2002, P.19).

2.2 An Overview of Marketing Public Relations (MPR)

Marketing Public Relations (MPR) has integrated marketing communications as its ‘top head’. Nowadays, public relations is considered as an extremely important role to complement the use of advertising – considering that advertising alone no longer works as effective as it used to be. Daniel Yankelovich, a public opinion analyst and social scientist has once said that “76% don’t believe that companies tell the truth in advertisements,” – as quoted from Rest in Peace Advertising Book (2011). MPR begins with its main component: Public Relations (PR).

There are differences in regards to the definition of public relations above. The classic

role of public relations (PR) is to foster goodwill between a firm and its many constituent groups. These constituent groups include customers, stockholders, suppliers, employees, government entities, citizen action groups, and the general public. However, the more 'practical' definition of PR has now changed into focusing on the third party to convey their message out to the public. It also all about how we engages relationship with the media (reporters, journalists, etc.).

As for the writer herself, the writer sees public relations as a more modern and sophisticated way to tell people what we are. It has a very strong impact. In writer's personal opinion, marketers should be more focusing on this strategy; considering the era of advertising has now a little bit shifted compared from the previous days.

Nowadays, consumers are spreading the word about brands as never before. People talk about brands; the challenge is to give them interesting things to talk about, things that bring one's brand into the conversation in a positive way. Marketers then start to get that PR isn't just about managing goodwill; it can be about finding ways to get your brand into the day-to-day conversation of key consumers (Semenik et al, 2012, P.631).

Duncan (2002, P.543) explained that marketers often talk, erroneously about using "public relations" to help promote a brand. What they are really talking about is using marketing public relations (MPR) which is just one function of public relations and is defined as the use of non-paid media to deliver the positive brand information designed to positively influence customers and prospects. The related but slightly more specific term is brand publicity which means using news releases and other media tools to broaden awareness and knowledge of a brand or company. MPR focuses more on customers and prospects, complementing other marketing efforts. It is different from traditional corporate public relations which focuses on a full range of stakeholder relationship programs.

Duncan also wrote that MPR is used to build brand credibility, make product news announcements, and reach hard-to-reach target audiences with articles in special interest and trade publications. It is particularly useful in launching new products. In an IMC program, monitoring and influencing unplanned messages is an important responsibility of public relations. MPR can be just as creative as advertising in its effort to build brand relationship and positive brand images. In truth,

advertising and public relations often work hand in hand.

This explanation than strengthen by the description from Harris and Whalen (2006: P.5) that marketing public relations (MPR) arose in the 1980s because of the need to distinguish the specialized application of public relations techniques that support marketing from the general practice of public relations. It is said that marketing public relations can be defined more precisely than the larger concept of public relations because of its relevance to marketing, specifically to helping an organization meet its marketing objectives. To summarize it up, they then defined marketing public relations as the use of public relations strategies and tactics to achieve marketing objectives. The purpose of MPR is to gain awareness, stimulate sales, facilitate communication, and build relationships between consumers, companies, and brands.

Harris and Whalen (2006: P.7) also wrote the definition that was suggested by Rene Henry (1995) in his book *Marketing Public Relations: The Hows that Make it Work!* that "Marketing public relations is a comprehensive, all-encompassing public awareness and information program or campaign directed to mass or specialized audiences to influence sales or use of a company's products or services." While the definition of marketing public relations in *Webster's New World Dictionary of Media and Communications* is "the use of special events, publicity, and other public relations techniques to promote products and services."

There is a very interesting quote in Harris and Whalen's book (2006, P.7), which is a description by Patrick Jackson (1989), a highly respected public relations counsel:

"Whatever an organization offers to whichever publics, the hard fact is that success lies in its sales – getting someone to sign on the dotted line, actually or figuratively. No matter what type of organization we're talking about, without successfully selling something, it fails. Therefore, both public relations and marketing ultimately exist to serve sales – goods, service, or ideas."

For easier comprehension, the writer has gathered some of the practitioners and lecturers' opinion, and concluded all of the opinions into this figure:

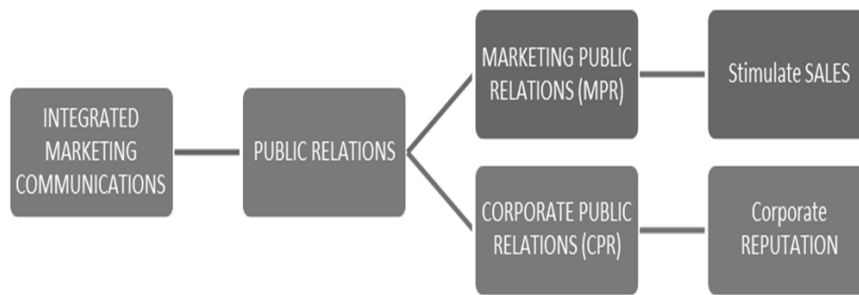


Figure 1.1
The Position of Marketing Public Relations
(Source: Writer)

Figure 2.1 above shows the understanding that took by the writer for this research about marketing public relations, regardless of all the definition and explanation above. The writer also wants to emphasize that in this research, the marketing public relations will be defined simply as “all of company’s efforts which have the news value so that media and consumers/prospect pay attention to the brand message (awareness) and is able to stimulate the decision-making process.”

2.3 An Overview of Consumer Decision-Making Process

According to Peter and Olson (2003, P.165), a decision involves a choice “between two or more alternative actions.” Decisions always require choices between different behaviors. Marketers are particularly interested in consumers’ purchase behaviors, especially their choices of which brand to buy. It also must be recognized, however, that consumers also make many decisions about non-purchase behaviors.

Sometimes these non-purchase choices can influence consumers’ purchase decision (deciding to go for a walk or watch TV may expose consumers to marketing information about products). Peter and Olson also stated that all aspects of affect and cognition are involved in consumer decision making, including knowledge, meanings, and beliefs activated from memory and attention and comprehension processes involved in interpreting new information in the new environment.

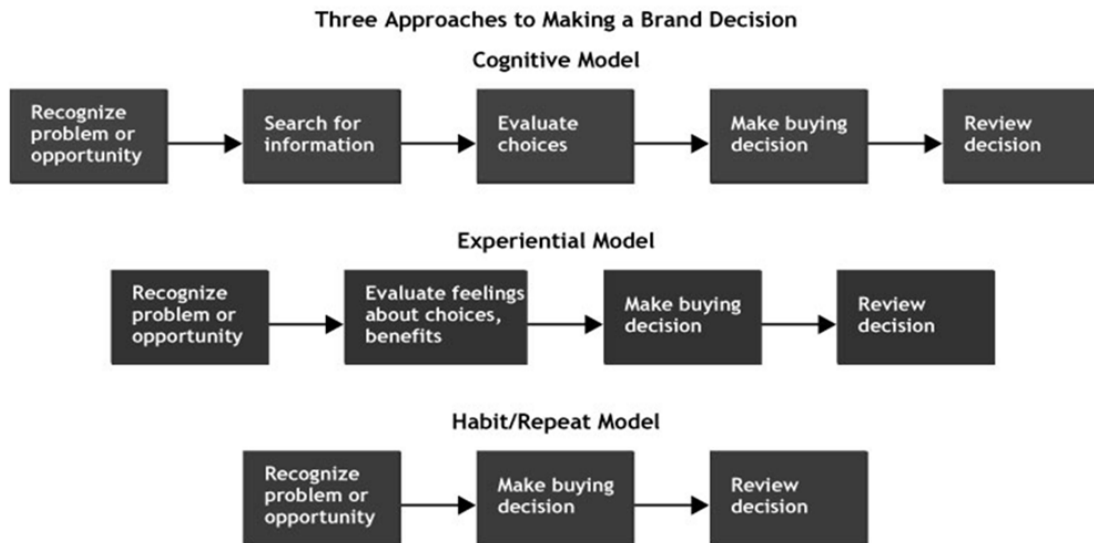
2.3.1 Three Buying-Behavior Situation

Duncan (2002, P.164-167) stated three approaches for decision-making models. There are the Cognitive Model, Experiential Model, and Habit/Repeat Model.

Each of the models has different steps. This figure below explains the steps of each decision-making model:

- a) Cognitive model of buying behavior is dependent on information processing. It says that once customer recognize a problem or opportunity, they (1) think about it; (2) search for the information, comparing product features that will help solve the problem or take advantage of the opportunity; (3) rationally evaluate the alternatives; and (4) make a decision that is as objective as possible. Emotion can exist within this model, but it plays minor role. Customers are said to use the cognitive model in situations where there is a significant element of risk and they are aware of the consequences of their actions. They are thus inclined to take more time to become informed and think carefully about the alternatives before taking some kind of actions. That is why such purchases are sometimes called considered-purchase. This model states that prospects and customers are likely to use rational criteria when considering an expensive product; an unfamiliar product; an infrequently purchased product; or a high-involvement product category. Once consumers take an action, they evaluate it rationally as well.
- b) In the experiential model of decision making, customer recognizes problem and opportunities from an emotional perspective. The customer’s evaluation of the decision is likewise emotionally based, with either good or bad feelings about the action taken. A good feeling says it is OK to make the same decision again.

Figure 1.2
Three Approaches to Making a Brand Decision



Source: Duncan (2002, P.167)

Table 1.1
The Cognitive Decision Process

Steps	Psychological Dimensions
1. Problem/opportunity recognition	Needs and wants, Attention, Selective perception
2. Information search	Awareness, Brand knowledge, central/peripheral processing, Active and passing processing
3. Evaluation of choices	Cognitive/Affective response, Evoked Sets, Preference and conviction, Likability, Source credibility
4. Behavior, action	Sample, Visit, Try/buy
5. Review of buying decision	Cognitive and conditioned learning, learning from satisfaction and dissatisfaction, cognitive dissonance

Duncan (2002, P.169)

- c) Habit or repeat decision making comes into use after one of the other two models have been used and a brand is evaluated as being OK to repurchase. This means that when a customer recognizes a problem or opportunity similar to the one that prompted the original purchase, the same response is triggered.

2.3.2 Cognitive Decision-Making Process

Cognitive Decision-Making Process contains 5 steps: Problem Recognition → Search for Information → Evaluate Choices → Make Buying Decision → Review Decision

2.3.2.1 Step I: Problem/Opportunity Recognition

Duncan (2002, P.168) explained that purchase decision begin in one of two ways: either by recognizing a problem that creates a need (or want) or by recognizing an opportunity that will provide

a benefit not previously thought or considered possible. The opportunity is presented by a brand message. Recognizing either a problem or an opportunity creates wants. Effective marketing communications consists of those brand messages that attract people's attention.

Lindquist and Sirgy (2009, P.37) also explained the marketing influences to the problem/opportunity recognition step. Similar the explanation from Duncan, they stated that information provided by marketers may trigger problem recognition, leading the consumer to re-evaluate his or her actual and desired states. Promotional activities such as advertising, coupons, free offers, sweepstakes, product demonstrations, and rebates are ways in which marketers seek to influence problem recognition. Product or service developments, like the announcement of a breakthrough in technology or ease of use or greater product capacity and such, can trigger a consumer's reassessment of his or her actual state and desired state with respect to the product or service. Place actions – where a product that was not available can now be ordered on the web, through a catalogue, or at one of the stores in town – also can trigger need recognition.

2.3.2.2 Step II: Information Search

Cognitive model of buying behavior is dependent on information processing. During the information search, brand awareness becomes important. Customers or potential customers may first begin searching their memories for information to help satisfy their needs and wants. For a brand message to have an impact on this search, it must do more than simply gain attention (Duncan, 2002, P.171).

2.3.2.2.1 The Awareness Factor

If simple brand awareness does not give customers enough information to make a purchase decision, they will look elsewhere – to past experiences, personal sources (e.g., referrals from friends or co-workers); marketing communication (e.g., advertising, packaging, displays, salespeople); public sources (e.g., mass media, organizations, Consumer Reports); or product examination and trial (e.g., test drives, free samples). Each of these sources of information requires a different amount of effort and carries a different amount of believability (Duncan, 2002, P.171-173)

Table 1.2
A Comparison of Information Sources

Source	Effort Required	Believability
Past Experience	Low	High
Personal Sources (e.g., friends)	Low	High
Marketing Communications	Medium	Low
Public Sources (e.g., media)	Low	High
Product examination and trial	High	High

Source: Duncan (2002, P.173)

Different yet similar to Duncan's explanation, Lindquist and Sirgy (2009, P.40) also describe their concept regarding information search step. They stated that information search can be divided into two: internal and external information search. Basically, internal search means memory and external search can be obtained through the sources that have already described in Table 1.2. However, Lindquist and Sirgy (2009, P.48) then also explained in detail in regards to the external search strategy:

1. Using Sets. Most consumers are looking for ways to limit the amount of external search to some manageable level. One way to do this is to restrict the number of products, brands, or retail outlets about which to gather

information. The most useful set is made up of those outlets or brands of which the consumer has front-of-mind awareness and that the consumer accepts as the group from among which a choice will likely be made. This was originally called the evoked set. Today, the terms "relevant set" and "consideration set" are used to represent essentially the same concept. Currently, "consideration set" is the most commonly used phrase when referring to this group.

2. Marketplace Information Sources are classified as either general (independent) or marketer-controlled (marketer-dominated, advocate). We have already known that marketer-controlled source will be around

sales, telemarketing, advertising, etc., - which is common and well-known. Hence, the explanation below is focusing more in the General/Independent Sources:

- a. General/Independent Sources also called independent source, are treated by consumers as being less biased. Therefore, more credibility is given to them than to those controlled by the marketer. Even so, some of the information available from general sources can be marketer generated. For example, writers, reporters, or editors for general source media may have been provided information by marketers. This may then be passed on as consumers are exposed to the information. General/Independent Sources are:

- i. Face-to-Face general sources, “personal influence”, may come from individuals such as relatives, friends, acquaintances, and others whom the consumer perceives to be expert or well informed.
 - ii. Mass Media general sources include the editorial content of newspapers and magazines, books, television, and radio programs, and any other information channel that reaches large segments of the buying public. Although not controlled by marketers, such media often use public relations releases from the marketer when disseminating information.
- Aside from Duncan’s, there is also another survey regarding the source credibility:

Figure 1.3
Believability of Information Sources

Believability of Information Sources

The following table shows the results of the Wirthlin Worldwide National Quorum telephone survey of 1,007 adults residing within the continental United States. It was done on February 19-22, 1999. The margin of sampling error is plus or minus three percentage points at a 95 percent confidence level.

	Very Believable (%)	Somewhat Believable (%)	Not at All Believable (%)
Review in <i>Consumer Reports</i>	58	37	5
Recommendation from a friend	52	42	5
News article	27	68	4
Magazine article	23	73	4
Evening network TV program	23	69	8
Radio news story	22	70	7
A seminar	22	63	12
TV talk show	17	48	33
Website on the Internet	11	60	18
Infomercial	9	48	42
Television commercial	8	71	21
Magazine ad	7	80	13
Salesperson in a store	6	73	21
Direct-mail piece	4	62	33
Celebrity endorsement	3	49	47

Source: (March 1999), “Buying Influences: Consider the Source,” *The Wirthlin Report*, 9, 3. Reprinted by permission of Wirthlin Worldwide.

From the above explanation, the writer comprehend that brand awareness is highly important to be ‘slipped’ through from the very first step – problem/opportunity recognition. Brand awareness at least has the power to ensure the brand/product to be considered in the consideration set, and then moving on to the information search. However, company should also be careful in choosing the right media to enhance their credibility.

2.3.2.3 Step III: Evaluation of Choices

Lindquist and Sirgy (2009, P.64) stated that alternative evaluation (evaluation of choices) involves two types of consumer sets. The universal

set is made up of all product, service, outlet, or brand alternatives in the marketplace to which the consumer has reasonable access, whether she or he is aware of them or not. Of these, a retrieval set is the subset that consumers can bring up from memory. The objective for marketers is to make sure that their products, services, outlets, or brands are, at a minimum, part of the latter set and therefore remembered when it comes time to buy. However, the key is to be part of the consideration set. Consumer sets are extremely important for marketers who want to attempt to influence alternative evaluation. Duncan (2002, P.178) stated that as a result of evaluating brand choices, customers form attitudes, or dispositions regarding objects, people, and ideas associated with a brand.

He also wrote that in attitude formation, there are two salient components: likability and credibility. As explained before, advertising is no longer considered as a preferred or trustworthy source. This is why the writer herself want to prove that the role of marketing public relations –which often linked directly with credibility and likability- is real in the decision making process with this study case.

2.3.2.4 Step IV: Behavior and Action (Make Buying Decision)

The behavioral stage is the one in which a customer takes some type of action in response to a message. At one time, marketers were concerned about generating only one type of behavior- a purchase. However, they have learned that there are other behaviors that are important for many product categories and for customers (Duncan, 2002, P.182).

2.3.2.5 Step V: Review of Buying Decision

The review process involves learning, which is a change in the knowledge base that comes from exposure to new information or experiences. Psychologists have two basic theories about how most of customers learn. The first is the cognitive learning theory, which is a view of learning as a mental process involving thinking, reasoning, and understanding. The second is conditional learning theory, which is a view of learning as a trial-and-error process. Learning also intersects with involvement in that cognitive learning typically occurs with high-involvement products, and conditional learning with low-involvement products.

Research Method

3.1 Research Approach

Qualitative research consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memo to the self. At this level, qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the people bring to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p.3). Even in applied research, this methodology has become more popular because of its finding that takes the form of a detailed and exhaustive narration. Thus, this is what the writer aims for, a detailed description which is deep but also understandable.

Since the qualitative method was chosen, the interpretive paradigm would also come along with

this research. Interpretive paradigm holds an understanding that social reality is subjective. It is a reality which experienced internally, built by social interactions and interpreted by the individuals who actively build the reality itself.

This research used a case study method which discussed a specific matter (the role of marketing public relations in cognitive-decision making process through the enhancement of brand awareness) in a holistic manner of a certain period (year 2011 - year 2013). The reason why it was chosen was based on Denzin and Lincoln (2001, p.17) who stated that a case study is the choice of the individual unit of study and the setting of its boundaries. Case study also comprises more detail, richness, completeness, and variance. Therefore, case study was a perfect fit for this research.

3.2 Data Collecting Technique

This paper is considered as a pilot research. Hence, writer used more of library research looking through several news or articles in regards to Chevrolet Spin to know the tonalities of most of the news that appeared. In addition to that, there were indeed several consumers of Chevrolet Spin who have been casually-interviewed as the primary data for this paper. However, the entire discussion would be focusing more on the secondary rather than primary data.

Discussion

The ASEAN region has been predicted to be one of the world's biggest automotive industries. It was stated that ASEAN is assessed to be offer a great opportunity for global car manufacturers. Vijay Rao, Research Director of Frost & Sullivan Automotive and Transportation Practice in Asia Pacific, conveyed that the automotive market in ASEAN has increased by 5.8% in the period of 2012-2013. This was due to the current market development in Indonesia and Thailand. Moreover, the weak level of ASEAN's motorization was also supporting the growth of automotive industry. Similar as the condition in the United States of America, the heat of competition would also rise due to this reason.

Frost & Sullivan has also predicted that Indonesia is going to be the biggest automotive market in ASEAN by 2019 with vehicles sales amounting to 2.3 million. This growth would be boosted by a stable economy growth, the rise of middle-class society, and investment increment in automotive sector, as well as the enforcement of automotive regulation which capable of supporting the market growth.

As had been studied by Frost & Sullivan, automotive industry would indeed become the backbone of all industries and Indonesian industrialization itself. Vice President of Indonesia, Boediono (as quoted from Tempo.co), once stated that the performance of automotive industry in the recent years has made it become one of the Indonesia's mainstays. This is in fact a very dynamic industry with its strategic position that capable of doing exports and as well as having a multiplier effect. Therefore, automotive is expected to strengthen Indonesia's economy.

Currently in 2014, the government has placed the development of automotive industry as a priority. Anticipating the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) Era in ASEAN and East Asia region, Indonesia's automotive industry is certainly being demanded to do innovations in creating vehicles which capable of fulfilling the market needs (domestic and export). The Head of Public Communications Center, Ministry of Industry, Hartono, explained that if we could not fulfill the market demand domestically (as in automotive products), then it will be undertaken by imported products. Seeing a 'green light' from the government itself, the automakers have now prepared their 'engine' to be as innovative as they can to win the Indonesians' heart.

In 2013, we could all see how in heat the automotive industry was – and is until now. All of the automakers, especially for car segment, were competing by launch their newest products or conducting some programs for the customers to make sure their brand will keep their place in the customer's mind. Until the last October 2013, the total of new vehicles reached the number of 112.038 units across Indonesia, while the total number of vehicle from January to October was recorded as 1.020.389 units.

Surveyed by various first tier websites in Indonesia (okezone.com, viva.com, detik.com, kompas.com, etc.), the top car brands which were chosen the most by Indonesian customers in 2013 are Toyota and Daihatsu. There are also other brands such as Suzuki, Nissan, and Honda who follow after Toyota and Daihatsu in the list. In addition of asking the respondent and judging from the sales in order to know the most favorite car brand, they also did the survey regarding the favorite car type. The top car type in 2013 (and predicted to continue) turns out to be the low multi-purpose vehicle or MPV for short.

MPV (multi-purpose vehicle) is a large car, similar to a van, and designed to carry up to eight passengers (however, it is usually a 7 passengers

seating in the common large size configuration). It is usually known as minivan in the American English term. MPV is designed taller than a sedan, hatchback, or station wagon. Seats are placed higher, giving passengers a more upright posture and providing more legroom. To be short, this is a type of car which can carries the whole family or friends.

There are several reasons of why MPV is dominating the market. The first and the main reason are the aspiration and behavior of Indonesian people. According from the news from koran-sindo.com, a survey by Google Inc. has found that 48% consumers in Indonesia is considering the number of additional family members when purchasing or replacing their car. If there would be any additional member in the family, consumer will automatically replaces their car with the one that is more spacious and has many seats. In other words, Indonesian

Society has the characteristic where they prefer a car which capable of carrying many people at one time, or so we called as family oriented / social oriented. They love travelling together with their friends and family. The other reason is in regards to the sustainability of the vehicle. Indonesian prefers cars those are able to stand the rough roads and MPV definitely has a higher ground clearance than any other car type. MPV is tougher to be driven on broken roads or puddle.

From the reason above, we can notice that the most preferred car is the 'family car' type. According to the data from Indonesian Automotive Industry Association (Gaikindo), more than the half of the automotive market share in Indonesia is being dominated by low MPV. In 2013, the sales for this segment have reached 434,289 units, conquered 54.8% of the whole market share. It was also stated that the presence of Low Cost Green Car (LCGC), which is just being launched in 2013, would not be able to avert the market. Finding a car that fits the whole family is still becoming the priority. This shows that price is indeed important, but not the most important factor for buyers.

In integrated marketing communications, there are three types of brand decision-making process: Cognitive Model, Experiential Model, and Habit/Repeat Model. Cognitive Decision Making which depends on information processing. It says that once a customer recognizes a problem or opportunity, they (1) think about it; (2) search for the information, comparing product features that will help solve the problem or take advantage of the opportunity; (3) rationally evaluate the alternatives; and (4) make a decision as objective

as possible. Emotion can exist within this model, but it plays a minor role. Customers are described to use the cognitive model in situations where there is a significant element of risk and they are aware of the consequences of their actions. They are thus inclined to take more time to become informed and think carefully about the alternatives before taking some kind of actions. That is why such purchases are sometimes called considered-purchase.

According to this model, prospects and customers are likely to use rational criteria when considering an expensive product; an unfamiliar product; an infrequently purchased product; or a high-involvement product category. Once consumers take an action, they evaluate it rationally as well. With that being said, we can categorize Chevrolet Spin as the product which

needs a cognitive decision-making process. For most people, a car is a type of product which we find it expensive and infrequently purchased. Therefore, the step of information-search plays an important role in the decision-making process.

During the information search, brand awareness has also becomes crucially important. Customers or potential customers may first begin searching their memories for information to help satisfy their needs and wants. For a brand message to have an impact on this search, it must do more than gaining attention, which means that advertising needs to be complemented with other strategy.

According to Paul Peter and Jerry Olson, there are various sources of information which can be accessed by public:

Source	Effort Required	Believability
Past Experience	Low	High
Personal Sources (e.g., friends)	Low	High
Marketing Communications	Medium	Low
Public Sources (e.g., media)	Low	High
Product examination and trial	High	High

From the table above, we can see that the most effective and efficient way to provide source are the public sources, and personal sources with low effort required yet have a high believability level, while marketing communications turns out having a medium effort required but only produce low believability level (Past experience also shows a low effort required and high believability, but this source can't be used due the status of 'new product' for Chevrolet Spin. In other words, GM Indonesia is aiming for the new users. From this comparison, we have to find a strategy which able to complement other common marketing tools (direct marketing, advertising, etc.), and that is marketing public relation.

However, there are proofs that it will be better if the awareness of the brand has been built from the first time; even before the problem/opportunity recognition occurred. As being stated by Lindquist and Sirgy (2009), what the most important thing is to include the brand in the consumer's consideration set.

Therefore, to complement the secondary data, the writer also interviewed six different customers of Chevrolet Spin. Shockingly, the assumption of the writer is true. All six customers have had known Chevrolet Spin far before they felt that they need to replace their car. Awareness had come first. Aside from this fact, four of them were also

first attracted to Chevrolet Spin through the news, not advertising or other promotional strategies.

They were also convinced to purchase Chevrolet Spin from only reading the news from various automotive news source; either it is online or offline media. Most of the respondents admitted that they have had not seen or did a test drive before the purchase. Purely from their judgment from the news they read – or so we say as marketing public relations.

When being asked about other promotional strategies and advertising, three respondents admitted that they have never seen the advertising before (at least before the purchase decision). One respondent said that although he has had seen the advertising, it didn't have an effect, and another conveyed that he indeed saw the advertising and aware about Chevrolet Spin, but the advertising was definitely not the reason to do the purchase.

Lastly, six respondents admitted that they much prefer to ask other car users and read the news from online or offline media than have to go to the dealership straight away. They said that going to the dealership will complicate their 'life' because the sales person would aggressively 'chase' them. They prefer to see the promotions and sales when they have decided to do the purchase. They also conveyed that during their decision-making, they have always been active in

searching for the news in online or offline media, even after they have bought Chevrolet Spin. This once again means that MPR has a strong role in consumer decision-making process, in regards to Chevrolet Spin's case. In addition, it also explains that other strategies are also needed, but not in the term of credibility which is highly acquired in the consumer decision-making process.

This has proven that Chevrolet Spin has succeeded to win the market's heart by implementing marketing public relations. The writer believes that this is a high achievement because we have to remember that Chevrolet Spin is a high-involvement product which needed credibility message to be sent to the prospect and consumers. This research has proved how marketing public relations is linked to the credibility.

However, as what quoted from Yasmina Prihadi, *Account Manager*, Weber Shandwick Public Relations Consultant (trusted by PT General Motors (GM) Indonesia to organize the strategies for publicity and media relations), that even in these days where marketing public relations is no longer a rare term among the industries, people still don't understand what it stands for. Most of industries or companies are still considering marketing public relations as a strategy or tool which heading directly to sales; which make sales as the measurement of marketing public relations' success. This is also a huge misunderstanding which needed to be fixed. Marketing public relations = credibility. It is neither profit nor sales.

The writer is also convinced that if this strategy were implemented, ASEAN will become their market; either if it is among the region or outside the region. We all have to remember that 'credibility' is now the key (especially for a new high-involvement product). It doesn't matter how much budget you spent for advertising or other promotional strategies if you don't send 'trust' to your prospect and consumers.

Conclusion

It is quite clear that marketing public relations indeed has some kind of impact to the consumer's mind. Chevrolet Spin has succeeded in going through the consumer's mind with an essence of credibility. Thus, the conclusion of this research has been emphasized so many times: the importance of marketing public relations' role in the consumer decision-making process. Now, MPR is the new word for 'credibility', 'likability', and 'trust'. However, complementing it with other strategies will be best. It will also be better if all business understood MPR as a mandatory strategy

for credibility. This also occurs for the ASEAN Economic Community competitiveness. How to win the market's heart is no longer about the budget you spent for advertising and other promotional strategies. To win the market in this tight competition of AEC, marketing public relations will be very effective and also efficient.

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